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# The Parthian Origins of the House of Rustam

A. S H. S H A H B A Z I

On more than one occasion my tutor of unequalled thoroughness, Professor A. D. H. Bivar, has discussed the evidential value of the *Šāhnāma* of Firdausī for a better understanding of Arsacid antiquity and has explored the possibility of placing Rustam, the heroic symbol of the Iranian people immortalized by Firdausī, in the context of Parthian history.<sup>1</sup> It is with deep gratification, therefore, that as a token of my profound debt to him I submit for his Festchrift certain data in support of his long-held conviction.<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

As Marquart and Nöldeke established long ago,<sup>3</sup> Iranian sagas which were eventually written down in the Sasanian official history, the *Xwadāy-nāmag*,<sup>4</sup> and immortalized in the *Šāhnāma* of Firdausī,<sup>5</sup> incorporated a good deal of Parthian history *reshaped* as narrative of earlier epochs as well as of the Sasanian period. Parthian magnates who, much like the great English lords of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, had their own domains, army, court, and family emblems (*nišān*),<sup>6</sup> appear in the traditional history as feudal lords serving the Kayānid King of Kings.<sup>7</sup> Apart from the House of Rustam, the following magnates play significant roles in the traditional history: Gōdarz the Kārinid and his sons, notably Gēv, and the latter's son, Bēžan; Mēlād, his son Gurgin-i Mēlād, and Xusrow-i Melādān; Farhād the Burzinian; Aškaš; and Zanga-yi Šāwurān. These paladins are clearly taken from Parthian history:<sup>8</sup> Aškaš symbolizes the family name Aršak, Gēv and Gōdarz the "GOTARZES son of GEW" of the Greek inscription at Behistun; Bēžan is the Parthian prince Wēzan (Oūa-

zanēs) recognized by Marquart in the *Act of Thomas*,<sup>9</sup> Mēlād and Melādān (< Mehrdād/Mithridates) as well as Farhād (/Phraates) and Xusrow (/Chosroes) are known Arsacid royal figures; Zanga-yi Šāwurān and Bēžan appear among the Arsacid kings in Sasanian-based literature; while Gorāza (< Varāz) is attested as the name of a great Arsacid family or clan.<sup>10</sup> Rival Arsacid magnates also find echo in the *Šāhnāma*. Thus, Šuntarx,<sup>11</sup> who challenged Gēv, represents Sanatruces; and Balāšan (written Palāšān), whom Bēžan slew, is none other than "son of Balāš/Vologases." Similarly, the Kūšāns, allies of the Turanians<sup>12</sup> and opponents of Gēv, Gōdarz and Rustam,<sup>13</sup> are the Kushans of historical records. Since Arsacid families continued to enjoy their feudal rights and historic prominence during the Sasanian period,<sup>14</sup> the preservation, albeit in re-shaped forms, of their earlier history in the Iranian national tradition was natural enough.

## 1. Antiquity of Rustam's Legends

The greatest and most heroic paladin of the national history was Rustam,<sup>15</sup> son of Dastān/Zāl. It is curious, therefore, that he does not find an evident prototype among the Arsacid magnates. It must be emphasized that Rustam was not a creation of Firdausī, although the latter certainly glorified his fame. By the end of the Sasanian period his legends were well known all over the Iranian lands, from Sogdiana in the east<sup>16</sup> to Armenia in the west,<sup>17</sup> and a substantial collection of them were compiled in a Pahlavi book mentioned by Masčūdi:<sup>18</sup>

Iranians have traditions on the deeds of Kay Xusrow and his capture of the slayers of Siyāwūš, son of Kāvōs,

and the stratagems and wars between the Iranians and Turanians, and the history (*xabar*) of Rustam the son of Dastān—too many to describe here without entering into long digressions. All such narratives are contained in the book *Sagzīkān* [The Sacians/Seistanians],<sup>19</sup> which Ibn al-Muqaffa<sup>c</sup> translated from Pahlavi (*Fārsiyat al-awlā*), as are the history of Sbandyāš (Isfandyār) son of Bištāsef (Wištāspa/Guštāsp) son of Luhrāsef and his slaying by Rustam and the killing of Rustam by Bahman, son of Sbandyāš<sup>20</sup> and other marvels and traditions of ancient Iranians. The Iranians hold this book in great esteem since it contains the history of their forefathers and former kings.

The adoption of Rustam's name in fifth-century Armenia,<sup>21</sup> where a Parthian heritage endured, bespeaks the antiquity of his legends among people of Parthian descent. Accordingly, some<sup>22</sup> have argued that Rustam was a Parthian hero already mentioned in a poetical text of Parthian origin, the *Draxt ī Asūrik* (Assyrian Tree).<sup>23</sup> Others maintain that he is the reincarnation of wholly mythical figures and his legends are reshaped stories of gods and demigods of yore.<sup>24</sup> There can be no denying, of course, that substantial myths from diverse sources (the Vreθrayna/Heracles repertory, for instance)<sup>25</sup> have been incorporated into Rustam's legends. Nevertheless, enough historical indications remain in his sagas to allow the conclusion that Rustam—the mightiest and most influential hero of the national tradition, and one closely linked by descent and deeds to the paladins of Parthian origin—also had a "historical niche," as Bivar put it,<sup>26</sup> in the Parthian period.

## 2. Marquart's Tracing of Rustam's History

As so often, it was Marquart who brilliantly traced the background of the house of Rustam. His reconstruction was based on the following grounds:<sup>27</sup>

a. Sakastān, the home of Rustam in epic, was historically the ancestral seat of the Sūrēn (Surenas),<sup>28</sup> one of the seven Arsacid great families, who ranked second only to the royal house and whose members had the hereditary privilege of crowning new kings.<sup>29</sup>

b. Roman historians usually mention the Surenas,<sup>30</sup> such as the vanquisher of Crassus in 53 B.C., without giving their personal names.

When discussing a Parthian conspiracy against Artabanus (II), which led to his overthrow and the assumption of the throne by a Roman nominee, Tiridates (II),<sup>31</sup> Tacitus provides the following data: the leader of the plot was "Sinnaces, a man of distinguished family and wealth";<sup>32</sup> his father, Abdagases, who brought to Tiridates "the royal emblems";<sup>33</sup> "the Surenas crowned Tiridates with the royal diadem in the presence of an approving assembly in accordance with the national tradition";<sup>34</sup> "then Abdagases ruled the court and the new king"<sup>35</sup> as if "the actual power was in his own house."<sup>36</sup> Pointing out that after crowning Tiridates, the Surenas vanishes from the records of events while the overwhelming influence of Abdagases is stressed, Marquart concluded that they were one and the same, i.e., Abdagases the Surenas, who was called by his family name when as the royal coronant he performed the function associated with his family rank.<sup>37</sup>

c. Among the Indo-Parthian kings who ruled Sakastān, Arachosia and Taxila, one is called "Abdagases, the nephew of Gondophares."<sup>38</sup> Alexander Cunningham had identified him as a grandson of the Abdagases of Tacitus. Marquart agreed,<sup>39</sup> pointing out that as Sūrēnids, Abdagases and Sinnaces would have been hereditary rulers of Sakastān, and that the probable date of Gondophares' accession (i.e., A.D. 20) adducible from one of his inscriptions,<sup>40</sup> made the latter a contemporary of Abdagases the elder and Sinnaces.

d. "The mythical representative of the kingdom of Sakastān since the time of Kay Kāōs is Rustam, the tutor of Siyāwaxš. . . . However, in epic the figure of the mighty king Gondophares has fused with the mythical hero."<sup>41</sup>

Having thus associated Rustam with the Sūrēnids of Sakastān as well as with Gondophares, Marquart went on to identify Rustam as a double of the mythical hero Keresāspa (Karšāp/Garšāsp) of the house of Sām.<sup>42</sup>

Rustam is Sāma Keresāspa. His name, Pahlavi Rōdāstaxm (written Rōtastaxm), is simply the transcription of an Awestan \*raoða•staxma, which by rule in later Pahlavi should have given roīstaxm, rōstahm,<sup>43</sup> and is originally nothing but an epithet of Keresāspa, like *naira-manah* [< Narīmān] "of manly heart."<sup>44</sup> They correspond not only in their feats but also in their religious attitude. Keresāspa is accused

of serving a *pairikā* [a wicked sorceress], and irreli-giousness forms the basis of the outbreak of religious war between Rustam and Spandyād as well as his son, Bahman, whose comparatively later origin has long since been recognized.

Nöldeke indirectly rejected Marquart's interpretation.<sup>45</sup> Rustam, he said, was a purely mythical element, totally different from the other heroes of the national epic in his origins, length of life and feats of arms. His genealogical connection with Keresāspa was artificial, and his geographical surroundings (i.e., Sakastān and Zābul or Arachosia) were not the same as those of the Avestan heroes or paladins of Parthian origins; yet "the original form of the name Rustam is Rōstahm, which can only be Iranian, just like the name of the hero's mother, Rōdābe, evidently from an original \*Rōtābak."<sup>46</sup> Therefore, "in all likelihood his legends belonged to the ancient inhabitants of Zaranka (Drangiana) and Arachosia; they were not brought from a northern homeland by the Sakas who invaded [in the late second century B.C.] the region which is ever since called after them Sakastān/Segestān/Sīstān."<sup>47</sup> Only much later were these legends incorporated into the heroic cycles of Avestan and Parthian origins. Christensen supported Nöldeke's view, stressing the lack of information on Gondophares and the dissimilarities between the legends of Keresāspa and those of Rustam.<sup>48</sup> Herzfeld, however, returned to Marquart's theory,<sup>49</sup> presenting it as a sound historical reconstruction, and he even connected the remains of Kūh-i Khwāja in Seistan with Rustam who, he said, "was identical with Gondophares."<sup>50</sup> Bivar took this view further. While admitting that both Rustam and Gondophares "were possibly members of the house of Sūrēn,"<sup>51</sup> Bivar saw closer similarities between Rustam and the Sūrēn who vanquished Crassus: both were connected with the Sakas; both crowned kings; both were magnates of the first rank and commanders-in-chief; and both were of unusual stature and bravery.<sup>52</sup> Bivar's valuable contribution was his discovery that a coin of Gondophares introduces him as<sup>53</sup>

Βασιλεύς/βασιλέων μ/έγας Ὑνδο/φέρρης/  
ο ἐπονο/μαζομέ/νος Σάμ  
"King of Kings, the great Hyndopherres, who  
is surnamed Sām."

### 3. Rustam's Kingdom

With "an explicit link" between the Gondophares of history and the House of Kresāspa (i.e., Sām) thus established,<sup>54</sup> an attempt may be made to shear Rustam of his legendary aspects and determine his "historical niche" in Parthian Iran. Let us first ascertain his domain.

As the hereditary king of Sakastān,<sup>55</sup> Rustam ruled a vast area, including the vassal kingdom of Kābul;<sup>56</sup> he had his own personal crown,<sup>57</sup> throne, banner and army.<sup>58</sup> His grandfather, Sām, had received from his overlord, King Manūčihr, a gift of magnificent richness, "a throne of turquoise and crown of gold, a ruby signet-ring and golden girdle."<sup>59</sup> Then Manūčihr added a charter ('ahd), investing Sām with

The whole of Kābul and Dnbr and Māy and  
Hind,  
From the China Sea (*daryā-yi čīn*) to that of  
Sind,  
From Zābulistān to the other side of Bust.

Kay Qubād confirmed this fief upon Rustam:<sup>60</sup>

From Zābulistān to the Sea of Sind (*daryā-yi sind*)...  
With the throne and crown of Nēmrūz,  
And Kābul, to be given to Mihrāb (as vassalage).

Kāos "invested Rustam with the hereditary throne, crown and rulership of Nēmrūz",<sup>61</sup> and Kay Xusrow bestowed on Frāmarz, son of Rustam, "the kingdom of all Hind, from Qinnauj to Seistan."<sup>62</sup> Sind/Hind, Dnbr, Māy-u Hind, Qinnauj, even Kashmir, as well as Bust, Zābul and Kābul are repeatedly and consistently given as dependencies of the House of Rustam.<sup>63</sup> To the north, the kingdom of Samangān (which survived in medieval Samangān in Bādgēs) formed a border between Sakastān and Tūran.<sup>64</sup>

It will be recalled that Kābul (and Kābulistan) and Zābul (and Zābulistān) were designations first introduced in the mid-Sasanian period. The former replaced the earlier name Gandhāra,<sup>65</sup> the latter Arachosia and part of Drangiana (> Zarang).<sup>66</sup> Until the eighth century, Rustam's nationality was invariably expressed as Sagzī (< Sakzīg) "Sakastānian/Seistāni,"<sup>67</sup> so that *Sag* (pl. *Sagān*) denoted Seistanian (see below). The name Saka came from a base *sak-* used of

"power" and of "skill."<sup>68</sup> There was no connection with the homonym *sak* "dog," Zoroastrian Pahlavi and New Persian *sag*.<sup>69</sup> However, when Islam took root, and the position of the dog (*sag*) as a revered animal became socially untenable, the term *Sagzī* (pl. *Sagān/Sagziān*) was given a pejorative connotation in folk etymology and came to be applied to the House of Rustam only by their *opponents*.<sup>70</sup> Thus, when a Tūranian hero challenges Rustam, "that *Sagzī* man," the latter protests: "Rustam hath named me Zāl the Zar; *Sagzī* why callest me, thou unaccomplished man?"<sup>71</sup> And a son of Spandyād/Isfandyār pointedly informs Rustam's brother that his father had left instruction "not to battle the *Sagān*."<sup>72</sup> Hence, the appellation *Sagzī* became unsuitable for Rustam, and was eclipsed by "Zābuli."<sup>73</sup>

Dnbr<sup>74</sup>/Dnbür<sup>75</sup>/Dnvr<sup>76</sup> of the *Šāhnāma* stands for Sanskrit *Udyānapūra* > *Ādynpūr* > *Dunpūr*, "a major city and the seat of Lamghānāt, on the right bank of the Kābul."<sup>77</sup> Margh-u Māy are not the two localities in Turkistan (cf. *Māymurgh*) but a rendering of *Vay-i hind* (better attested in connection with Sām's fief as *Māy-i hind*<sup>78</sup>), from Sanskrit *Udabhānda* > *Ohind*, a region situated "between the Indus and the Kabul river, just above their confluence."<sup>79</sup> According to Bīrūnī, *Vay-hind* "was the capital of the kingdom of *Gandhāra*."<sup>80</sup> As *daryā* meant both "sea" and "river" (cf. Āmū-d. "Oxus" and Sīr-d. "Jaxartes"), "*Daryā-yi Sind*" stands for the river *Sind* (i.e., *Sind-rūd*) or the Indus, and "*Daryā-yi Čīn*" for *Čīnāb* (> Chenab), one of the "Five rivers (Panjab)," which irrigates Multan. Finally, *Qinnauj* (> Indian *Kanyākubja* > Kanauj) was a region on the Ganges well known for its superb cavalry.<sup>81</sup>

Rustam's kingdom thus extended from the Hāmūn Lake (Zarih) to the Indus. It lay east of the Great Desert (Biyābān-i Karkas), south of Khorasan (running along a line bordering on Bādgēs<sup>82</sup>–Bactriana<sup>83</sup>–Tuxāristān<sup>84</sup>), west of the Chenab and the Indus rivers,<sup>85</sup> north of lower Baluchistan and eastern Kirman.<sup>86</sup> This greater Sakastān, incorporating Drangiana/Zarang, Aria/Herat, Arachosia/Ruxxaj (later Zābul), *Gandhāra* (later Kābul), part of *Kashmir*<sup>87</sup> and Hind/Sind, corresponds to "the whole of Sakastān," a name given to the Indo-Scythian kingdom of Maues (early first century B.C.) in an inscription on the Lion Capital of Mathura,<sup>88</sup> and to the later Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gondophares.

#### 4. The House of Rustam

We next turn to Rustam's descent. "My noble origin," he said, is "from the House of Sām (*tuxma-yi Sām*)."<sup>89</sup> Sām's son, Dastān, also called Zāl (= Zar), married Rōdābe, daughter of Sēnduxt<sup>90</sup> and "Mihrāb [King of Kābul = *Gandhāra*], under whom the Land of Sind (*Kišwar-i Sind*) prospered, and whose fifth ancestor was Zahhāk, most celebrated among kings of the world."<sup>91</sup> The union produced two sons: Rustam "strong in body"<sup>92</sup> (also called *Tahm·tan* "strong in body!" and *Tāj·baxš* "crown bestower"/"coronant"<sup>93</sup>), and Zavārah (> Uzvārak "heroic").<sup>94</sup> Rustam married *Tahmine*,<sup>95</sup> daughter of Samangānshāh,<sup>96</sup> and begot Suhrāb<sup>97</sup> "the Red one" (var. Surxāb, Surxa, Suxrāy; Old Persian *Θuxrā*; cognate with Sūrēn and *sūr* "red, fiery").<sup>98</sup> He also took to wife Šahr·bānū-Iram, daughter of Gōdarz the Kārinid, and begot Farāmarz<sup>99</sup> and two daughters, Zar·bānū and Bānū-Guš(n)asp;<sup>100</sup> the latter married Gēv, son of Gōdarz, and begot Bēžan.<sup>101</sup> Zavārah had two sons, Tuxār and Farhād;<sup>102</sup> Farāmarz also had two, Āzar-burzīn and Sām.<sup>103</sup>

An interesting account of the House of Sām is given by the *Iranian Bundahišn* in the chapter "on the races and genealogy" of Iranian traditional kings.<sup>104</sup> Sām, it says, had six children in pairs of male and female, each bearing the same name. The leading son was Dastān, to whom Sām gave "*Sagān-sēh* (= *Sakastān*) and the region of south (Nēmrōč). And he (Sām) gave the lordship of Aparshahr to Aparnak. Aparshahr is said to be = Aparnak-shahr (the country of the Aparnak)."<sup>105</sup> Another son, Xusrow, received the kingdom of Ray. To the fourth, Mārgandag, Sām gave the kingdom of Patišwārgar (i.e., "Parišwār mountain, later Tabaristān). The fifth, Sparnag (Aspandag?) received the rulership of Isfahan (< Aspa·dāna),<sup>106</sup> the sixth, Damnag (?) that of Asōristān (= Babylonia/Mesopotamia). The association of Sām with the Aparniāns/Aparni, the royal group of the Dāhi/Dahae (Old Persian Dahā, Avestan Dāha)<sup>107</sup> is confirmed<sup>108</sup> by a tradition in Ṭabarī<sup>109</sup> which names Abarnag as the father of Narīmān (= Sāma Kresāspa).

The *Bundahišn* account must be studied with a second one transmitted by Ṭabarī<sup>110</sup> as follows:<sup>111</sup>

Bištāsef (Wištāspa) appointed seven persons to the highest ranks, and they were the magnates (*‘uzimā*),

[including] Nihābiða,<sup>112</sup> and his residence was Dihistān in the Land of Jurjān (/Hyrcania); and Kārin the Parthian (Qārin al-Fahlavī), and his residence was Māh-Nihāvand (i.e., Media); and Sūrēn the Parthian, and his residence was Sejistān (Sakastān); and Isfandyāð the Parthian, and his residence was Ray.

Marquart saw in this tradition the memory of a division of the Parthian empire under Vologases I.<sup>113</sup> An attempt to describe the major kingdoms of the Arsacid empire<sup>114</sup> is, at any rate, clear from both accounts. In the light of this, the tradition which made Rustam the seventh descendant (on his mother's side) of Zahāhk assumes a particular significance. In the Avesta, Aži Dahāka is a formidable dragon who tried to seize the God-given Fortune (*Xvarenah*) and was vanquished by Oraētaona/Frēdōn. This legend developed into that of Zahāhk, a demonic king who ruled Iran for one thousand years until overthrown by Frēdōn.<sup>115</sup> Yet this very figure enjoyed a favorable reputation in Iranian history. Rustam is clearly proud of his descent from Dahāk,<sup>116</sup> as were the Sām Dynasty of Ghūr in the Islamic period;<sup>117</sup> the Kushans were said to have descended from Dahāk,<sup>118</sup> as were Armenians of a province near Lake Sevas (even though scholastic rationalism identified Aždahak with the homonym Astyages the Mede!);<sup>119</sup> and it was Dahāk who had given Patišwārgar as fief to its local dynast<sup>120</sup> of Arsacid lineage,<sup>121</sup> and he who had built Nahr-i Tērē, which became "the Parthian prison."<sup>122</sup> It appears that Dahāk/Zahāhk was considered to have been the eponymous father of a formidable Iranian people,<sup>123</sup> as \*Airyaēča < Ērēč > Iraj was of the Airya > Iranians and \*Tūr(a)ča > Tūč of the Tūranians. Indeed, the *Farvardīn Yasht* (143–44) mentions five divisions of the Iranians: Airya, Tūriya, Sāinu,<sup>124</sup> Dāhi and Sairima. Xerxes named the Dāhi among his subjects, next to (other) Sakā people; and classical sources testify that the Dahae/Dāhi were powerful Sacians<sup>125</sup> who formed the kernel of the Arsacid invaders of Parthia and that the Arsacid royal house originated among the Aparni/Parni/Aparnakian Dahae.<sup>126</sup> Rustam was thus a Dahae on his mother's side; and indeed, a "Land of Dahae (> Dihistān)" survived to the Islamic period on the border of Sakastān, as the capital of Bādgēs.<sup>127</sup> If we now turn back to the account of the *Bundahišn* on the six sons of Sām, and bear

in mind that in book Pahlavi the letter *h* closely resembles *mn* or *mw* combined, we cannot fail to recognize in Damnag "King of Asōristan," a misreading for Dahag < Dahāg, whom tradition credited with the founding of Babylon.<sup>128</sup>

## 5. Rustam's Dragon Banner

The Parthian origins of Rustam are confirmed by yet another piece of evidence. Reflecting Parthian and Sasanian society, the *Šāhnāma* consistently associates heroic figures with family emblems adorning their tents and banners.<sup>129</sup> Most notably, Gōdarz has a golden lion on his banner (*dirafš*),<sup>130</sup> Gēv a wolf,<sup>131</sup> Gorāza (> Varāz, "Boar") a wild boar crowned with a golden moon<sup>132</sup> and Rustam a dragon.<sup>133</sup> His grandfather, Sām, also had a dragon banner,<sup>134</sup> as did Rustam's son, Farāmarz.<sup>135</sup> Now, as is well known, silken banners bearing the image of a dragon were typical Parthian military emblems.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, while Sasanian banners were of diverse designs, only that of Bahrām-i Čōbin, who claimed Arsacid heritage,<sup>137</sup> had a dragon as its device.<sup>138</sup> The exception was explained with reference to Bahrām's "Rustam-like heroism" inducing Hormazd IV to give Rustam's banner to Bahrām.<sup>139</sup> A reference to "the family emblem" common to the Parthian Rustam and Arsacid Bahrām would have been to the point.

## 6. Chronology of the House of Rustam

The end of the princely house of Sakastān as given by the traditional history also imparts a historical clue. It claims that Bahman, son of Spandyāð, avenged his father's death at the hand of Rustam by invading Sakastān with an "Iranian army,"<sup>140</sup> vanquishing the house of Rustam (in one version, even killing Rustam himself, see above) and devastating Sakastān and Zābulistān.<sup>141</sup> Bahman's epithet was Ardašēr,<sup>142</sup> and as a matter of fact it was Ardašēr, son of Pāpak, who overthrew the Parthian rulers of east Iran "and conquered Sakistān."<sup>143</sup> This province remained a prominent vassal kingdom ruled by Sasanian princes.<sup>144</sup> The memory of the action of the Sasanian Ardašēr was thus transferred to the Kayānid Bahman-Ardašēr.<sup>145</sup>

This provides a *terminus ante quem* for the downfall of the descendants of Rustam. Since

the division of his kingdom by Sām represents Sakastān and its neighboring regions as well as Asōristān as vassals of a great imperial system, the *terminus ante quem* must necessarily be after Mithridates the Great's conquests, namely, around 90 B.C. The involvement of the Kushans, the marriage of Rustam to a daughter of Gōdarz (i.e., Gotarzes II, ca. A.D. 38–51), and the evidence of the surname Sām assumed by Gondophares all point to the first half of the first century A.D. as the probable date of the Parthian prince of Sakastān whom the epic tradition remembered as Rustam.

## Notes

1. "Gondophares and the Shāhnāma," *IA* 16 (1981), pp. 141–50; "The Political History of Iran under the Arsacids," in *CHIr*, vol. 3.1 (1983), pp. 21–99, esp. 50–51.

2. Further details on Sām, Zāl, and Farāmarz will appear elsewhere.

3. J. Marquart, "Beiträge zur Geschichte und sage von Erān," *ZDMG* 49 (1895), pp. 628–72. Th. Nöldeke, "Das iranisches Nationalepos," in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, vol. 2 (Strassburg, 1896), pp. 130–211; 2d ed. *Das iranisches Nationalepos* (Leipzig, 1920), pp. 6–9. All references are to this second, separate edition.

4. On which see A. Sh. Shahbazi, "On the *Xwadāy-nāmag*," in *Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, ActIr 30 (Leiden, 1990), pp. 208–29.

5. See A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Ferdowsī: A Critical Biography* (Costa Mesa, Calif., 1991), pp. 108–17.

6. *Šāhnāma* (Moscow ed.), vol. 2, pp. 212ff.; vol. 4, pp. 41ff.; vol. 5, pp. 188–206; *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, trans. N. G. Garsoian (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), pp. 73, 108, 150, 185, 226. See in general N. G. Garsoian, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Iranian Aspects in Arsacid Armenia," *Handes Amorya* 90 (1976), pp. 178–234.

7. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 4, pp. 41ff. and *passim*.

8. Marquart, "Beiträge," pp. 635–45; *idem*, "Iberer und Hyrkanier," *Caucasia* 8 (1931), pp. 78–113, esp. 85–98; Nöldeke, "Das iranisches Nationalepos," pp. 6–9. See further Z. Safa, *Hamāsa sarāži dar Irān*, 2d ed. (Tehran, 1333/1954), pp. 575–88; J. C. Coyajee, "The House of Gotarzes: A Chapter of Parthian History in the *Shahnamah*," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 28 (1932), 207–24; E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History," *CHIr*, vol. 3.1 (1983), pp. 395–477 esp. 457–61.

9. J. Marquart, *Die Chronologie der alttürkischen Inschriften* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 67–68.

10. On this family see W. B. Henning, "Notes on the Great Inscription of Šāpūr I," *Professor Jackson Memorial Volume* (Bombay, 1954), pp. 40–54 esp. 50.

11. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 4, p. 136, v. 335.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 162ff.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 188ff.

14. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2d rev. ed. (Copenhagen, 1944), pp. 103–6; Garsoian, "Prolegomena," *passim*.

15. Gōdarz addresses Rustam: "You are the support of Iran, the crown of leaders, the worthy one before whom we are all subordinates," *Šāhnāma*, vol. 4, p. 276, v. 1049. Similar descriptions in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 181, v. 711; p. 218, v. 1246; p. 195, v. 322; p. 202, v. 397; vol. 4, p. 157, vv. 637, 643, etc.

16. As is evidenced by the eighth-century Sogdian fragment describing Rustam's encounter with some dévs: E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* (Paris, 1940), pp. 134ff.: Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 456, with literature.

17. Moses Khorenats*cī*, *History of the Armenians*, trans. R. W. Thompson (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 2.8 (= p. 141): "The Persians say that Rostom Sagdijk had the strength of 120 elephants."

18. *Murūj al-dhahab* (Paris, 1861–77), vol. 2, p. 118.

19. Following Safa's amendment (*Hamāsa sarāži dar Irān*, pp. 45–46) in preference to that of the editor as *Sakasarān* "Leaders of the Sakas."

20. This version is confirmed by Ṭabarī (Leiden, 1879), vol. 1, p. 687, while the *Šāhnāma* (vol. 6, pp. 322–37) and Thā'ālibī (*Churār akhbār mulūk al-Furs*, ed. and trans. H. Zotenberg [Paris, 1900], 379ff.) say that Rustam's half-brother, Šayād, murdered him through treachery. Dīnawarī (*Akhbār al-Tiwāl*, ed. V. Guirgass [Leiden, 1888] p. 28) states that soon after Isfandyād's death, Rustam died of the wounds he had received from the former.

21. *P'awstos Buzand* 6.6 (= p. 124); H. W. Bailey, *BSOAS* 8 (1937), p. 1154.

22. Safa, *Hamāsa sarāži dar Irān*, pp. 566–67; G. Widengren, *Iranisch-Semitisch Kulturgeggnung in partischer Zeit* (Köln, 1960), p. 35, n. 117. "Rōtastahm" also appears in the *Ayātkār i Zarēran* §16 (F. Justi, *Iranische Namenbuch* [Marburg, 1895], p. 263; H. W. Bailey, "Khotanese Saka Literature," *CHIr*, vol. 3.2, pp. 1231–32) but here it "probably means 'hero' in general"; W. Geiger, "Das Yātkār-i Zarīrān und seine Verhältnis zum Šāhnāma," *Sitzungsberichte der K. bayer. Akad., philos.-philol. Klasse* (1890), pp. 48–84, esp. 51.

23. Against the evidence of the *Draxt i Asūrik* see A. Christensen, *Les Kayanids* (Copenhagen, 1931), p. 138, n. 2.

24. E.g., S. Wikander, "Sur le fonds commun indo-iranien des épées de la Perse et de l'Inde," *La nouvelle Clio* 2 (1950), pp. 310–29. G. Hüsing's *Beiträge zur*

*Rostahmsage (Sajjid Baṭṭāl)*, (Leipzig, 1913) cannot be taken seriously.

25. This will be discussed in detail elsewhere.
26. *CHIr*, vol. 3.1, p. 51.
27. "Beitrage," pp. 635ff.
28. *Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, p. 683. See also below.
29. Plutarch, *Crassus* 21; Tacitus, *Annals* 6.42; Garsoian, "Prolegomena," pp. 210–12.
30. See the list in Justi, *Iranische Namenbuch*, pp. 316–17.
31. On whom see Bivar, "The Political History of Iran under the Arsacids," pp. 73–74.
32. *Annals* 6.31.3; 36.3.
33. *Ibid.*, 6.37.5–6.
34. *Ibid.*, 6.42.6.
35. *Ibid.*, 6.43.2.
36. *Ibid.*, 6.43.4.
37. "Beitrage," pp. 636–37.
38. Here Marquart referred to A. Cunningham, "Coins of the Sakas," *NC* [1890], pp. 117–20, 158–65.
39. "Beitrage," p. 636, n. 6.
40. For this inscription see now Bivar, "The History of Eastern Iran," in *CHIr*, vol. 3.1, pp. 222, no. 14 (not 12 as printed on p. 197, n. 1).
41. "Beitrage," p. 643.
42. *Ibid.*
43. On the forms of Rustam's name see Bailey, "Khotanese Saka Literature," pp. 1231–32.
44. C. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch* (Strassburg, 1904), col. 1053.
45. *Das iranische Nationalepos*, p. 10.
46. *Ibid.* Against the tracing of Rustam's name in Elamite tablets of Persepolis see W. Hinz, *Altiranisches Sprachgut der Nebenüberlieferungen* (Wiesbaden, 1975), p. 200, with references.
47. Contrast E. Yarshater, "Iranian National History," p. 456.
48. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, pp. 135–37.
49. E. Herzfeld, *AMI* 4 (1931–1932), pp. 91ff.; *Idem*, *Archaeological History of Iran* (London, 1935), pp. 57, 66.
50. *AMI* 4 (1932), p. 114.
51. *CHIr*, vol. 3.1, p. 51.
52. *Ibid.*, and more fully in "Gondophares and the Shāhnāma," pp. 142–45.
53. "Gondophares and the Shāhnāma," pp. 146–50.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 150, B. Sarkārātī, "Rustam, yak ṣaxṣiyat-i tārīx yā ustūra-ī?," *Majalla-yi dāniškad-yi addabiyyāt va ʻūlūm-i Dānišgāh-i Firdausi* 12 (1345/1976), pp. 161ff., had dismissed attempts to determine a link between Rustam and history as scholastic fantasies.
55. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 2, p. 32, v. 396; p. 72, vv. 159–61; p. 125, vv. 890–900; vol. 4, p. 30, vv. 351–56; vol. 6, p. 133, v. 983; p. 224, v. 106; p. 403, vv. 2845–51.
56. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 72 v. 161. Cf. vol. 1, p. 155, vv. 290, 299.
57. Even as a child, he wore a crown: *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 243, v. 1567.
58. See references given in n. 55; and, in general, G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (Köln, 1969), pp. 21–23. On Rustam's banner see below.
59. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 1, pp. 150–51, vv. 215–28.
60. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 72, vv. 159–61.
61. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 125, vv. 890ff.
62. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 30, vv. 350ff.
63. See nn. 55–56, and *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 29, v. 344; vol. 5, pp. 385, 390, 391; vol. 6, p. 257.
64. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 171, v. 18.
65. J. Marquart, *Ērānšahr* (Berlin, 1901), pp. 39–40; and with J. J. M. de Groot, "Das Reich Zābul und der Gott Žun vom 6.–9. Jahrhundert," in *Festschrift Eduard Sachau* (Berlin, 1915), pp. 248–92, esp. pp. 260–61.
66. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 250ff.; "Das Reich Zābul," pp. 257–59.
67. R. V. Stackelberg, "Iranica," *ZDMG* 45 (1891), pp. 620–21; H. W. Bailey, *The Culture of the Sakas in Ancient Iranian Khotan* (Delmar, N.Y., 1982), pp. 8–9.
68. Bailey, *ibid.*, p. 9.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
70. Stackelberg, "Iranica," p. 620.
71. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 4, p. 243, v. 530.
72. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 282, v. 1065. Cf. "That Sagzī-ī, Rustam," *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 139, v. 342; "You! the Sagzī, worse than all others," *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 251, v. 648. See also vol. 4, p. 199, v. 1337; p. 229, v. 313; p. 243, vv. 528, 534; p. 245, v. 561; p. 248, v. 598; vol. 6, p. 282, v. 1063; p. 284, vv. 1093f.; p. 285, v. 1102; p. 301, v. 1337; p. 304, v. 1384.
73. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 220, v. 186; also p. 217, v. 141; p. 227, v. 282; p. 228 v. 298 and *passim*. Cf. Marquart, "Beiträge," p. 643.
74. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 1, p. 151, v. 225; p. 155, v. 291; vol. 5, p. 390, v. 2612.
75. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 385, v. 2528.
76. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 391, v. 2624.
77. V. Minorsky, *Hudūd al-Ālam*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1982), p. 252.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 252, n. 7.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 253–54.
80. *India*, p. 101 cited in *ibid.*, p. 254.
81. *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 246–47; Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 263–64.
82. This is to be inferred from the position of Samangān (see above with n. 64).
83. Note that when Guštāsp desired to visit Rustam, "he left Balk for Zābulistān": *Šāhnāma*, vol. 6, p. 134, v. 1000.
84. As the position of ancient Gandhara/Kābul, south of Tuxāristān, shows.
85. See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 151, v. 225; vol. 2, p. 72, v. 159; vol. 4, p. 30, v. 35.
86. This is inferred from Rustam's overthrow of a troublesome neighbor, Kuk-i Kuhzād, leader of the

Afghans and Baluchīs, in an early and soundly based epic; see Safa, *Hamāsa sarāži dar Iran*, pp. 318–22. The name Kuk reminds one of Kūk, a town in the district of Khabīs in Kirmān mentioned by Muqaddasī, later Gok (P. Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter*, vol. 2 [Leipzig 1912], p. 227). Also the limit of Rustam's kingdom is specified as inclusive of "Zābulistan, Bust, Gaznīn and Kabulistan," *Šāhnāma*, vol. 6, p. 224, v. 106, cf. vol. 1, p. 151, vv. 224–26.

87. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 170, v. 2651; vol. 4, p. 29, v. 344.

88. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 46; Bivar, *CHIr*, vol. 3.1, p. 195.

89. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 6, p. 255, v. 618.

90. In the Avesta, Saēna "eagle" is the name of an Iranian family (Yašt 13.126)—just as Sāma. It recurs in such Parthian names as Sinnaces, Sanabares, Sina-truces/Sanatrūk, and much later, as the name of the father of Abū Ḫāli Sinā.

91. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 6, p. 257, vv. 660–61.

92. Bailey, *CHIr*, vol. 3.2, pp. 1231–32.

93. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 2, p. 104, v. 533; p. 171, v. 20, p. 172, v. 40; p. 200, v. 388; vol. 4, p. 253, v. 694; vol. 6, p. 225, v. 123; p. 296, v. 1271. The term is to be explained with reference to Rustam's instrumental role in crowning Kay Qubād and Bahman, cf. vol. 2, pp. 56–61; vol. 6, p. 350, v. 136.

94. Justi, *Iranische Namenbuch*, p. 337.

95. Note the connection with *Tahm.tan*, parallel to those of Rustam and Rūdābe.

96. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 1, pp. 172–76.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

98. For etymologies and cognates see Justi, *Iranische Namenbuch*, pp. 312–13.

99. According to an interpolated passage of the *Šāhnāma*, vol. 2, pp. 258–59. This is from the epic *Farāmarznāma*, ed. Rustam son of Bahram-Sorūš (Bombay, 1907), p. 364, line 14.

100. *Farāmarznāma*, pp. 25ff. See also *Mujmal al-Tawārīx wa al-qīṣāṣ*, ed. M.-T. Bahār (Tehran, 1318/1939), p. 54.

101. *Farāmarznāma*, pp. 59–75. See also n. 99.

102. Īrānshāh b. Abi al-Xayr, *Bahmannāma*, ed. R. Ḥafīfi (Tehran, 1991), pp. 210ff.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 413ff.; *Farāmarznāma*, pp. 407ff.

104. *Zand-Ākāsīh*, trans. B. T. Anklesaria (Bombay, 1956), pp. 298–301.

105. This is J. Markwart's translation in *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānshahr*, ed. G. Messina (Rome, 1931), p. 52. See also Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, p. 67; E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (Brussels, 1953), p. 42, n. 2; p. 175.

106. Marquart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 27.

107. On the names see in details H. W. Bailey, "Iranian Arya- and Daha-," *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1959), pp. 71–115 esp. pp. 107ff.; *Dictionary of Khotan Saka* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 155.

108. The objections by P. Lecoq, "Aparna," in *EIr*, vol. 2, p. 151, were unfounded and contrary to the evidence of Tabarī (see n. 109).

109. Tabarī, vol. 1, p. 598, with Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, p. 131, n. 2.

110. Tabarī, vol. 1, p. 683.

111. See Marquart, "Beiträge," pp. 635ff.

112. On this name see H. W. Bailey, "Iranian Medley," in *Orientalia J. Duchesne-Guillemin Emerito Oblata*, ActIr 23 (Leiden, 1984), p. 41 with reference.

113. "Beiträge," p. 637.

114. "The Parthians possess altogether eighteen kingdoms," Pliny, *Natural History* 6.29.1.

115. Details and references in L. Gray, *The Foundations of the Iranian Religions* (Bombay, 1922), pp. 187–91; M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1975), pp. 67, 91, 98, 100, 103, 283, 289, 293; P. O. Skjærvø, "Aždahā," in *EIr*, vol. 3 (1989), pp. 191–99.

116. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 6, p. 257.

117. Minhāj Sarrāj, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Ḥabibī (Tehran, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 318–23; Minorsky, *Hudūd*, p. 174.

118. Evidenced by the story of Kūš, nephew of Zahāhk and founder of Šahr-i Kūšan (= Kūšānšahr), composed in an epic by Īrānshāh son of Abu al-Xayr; Safa, *Hamāsa sarāži dar Iran*, pp. 296–300; cf. *The Mujmal-al-Tawārīx*, pp. 89, 187, 189.

119. Moses Khorenatsī, *History of Armenia*, 2.49 (= p. 190).

120. Marquart (Markwart), *Provincial Capitals*, p. 18.

121. *Idem*, *Ērānšahr*, p. 130.

122. *Idem*, *Provincial Capitals*, p. 20.

123. Cf. Moses Khorenatsī, *History of Armenia*, p. 127: "The one they [= the Persians, i.e., some Iranians] call Biurasp Azhdahak was their ancestor."

124. Sāinu, possibly an adjective of *Sinu-*, equivalent to *Sindu* Gk, *Sindoi*, near the Sarmatai country: Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 155.

125. Bailey, "Iranian Arya- and Daha-," pp. 71–115.

126. Bivar, *CHIr*, vol. 3.1, pp. 26–29.

127. G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 414–15.

128. Markwart, *Provincial Capitals*, p. 66.

129. A. Sh. Shahbazi, "Derafš," in *EIr*, vol. 7 (forthcoming).

130. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 2, p. 213, vv. 556ff.; vol. 4, p. 27, v. 300; p. 43, v. 527.

131. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 214, vv. 577ff.; vol. 4, p. 27, v. 304; p. 43, v. 526.

132. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 215, v. 588; vol. 4, p. 29, v. 324; p. 42, v. 524.

133. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 214, v. 567; vol. 4, p. 170, v. 860; p. 177, v. 1113; p. 189, v. 1177; p. 282, v. 1139; *Farāmarznāma*, p. 22, line 17; p. 23, line 6. Widengren, *Feudalismus*, p. 17, n. 35.

134. Widengren, loc. cit., citing *Garšāspnāma*.

135. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 4, p. 29, v. 345; p. 30, v. 351.
136. Widengren, *Feudalismus*, pp. 17–18 with references.
137. See more recently A. Sh. Shahbazi, "Bahrām VI Čōbin," in *EIr*, vol. 3, pp. 519–22.
138. *Šāhnāma*, vol. 8, p. 345, vv. 508–9; vol. 9, p. 33, v. 382.
139. *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 345, vv. 511–14.
140. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 348, v. 9.
141. *Ibid.*, pp. 343–51; *Bahmanāma*, pp. 191–340 (cf. *Farāmarznāma*, pp. 408–50).
142. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, pp. 98, 124.
143. Ṭabarī, vol. 1, p. 819.
144. Honigmann-Maricq, *Recherches sur le Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, pp. 94ff.
145. Similarly a town near later Başra founded by Ardašēr-i Pāpakān was called Bahman-Ardašēr Xarrah (< Bahmanšēr): Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar Kitāb al-Buldān* (Leiden, 1885), p. 198; *Mujmal al-Tawārīx*, p. 54.

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Gondophares the SĀH (SĀE): Postscript to "The Parthian Origins of the House of Rustam"

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**Gondophares the SĀH (SAE):  
Postscript to "The Parthian Origins  
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In my article "The Parthian Origins of the House of Rustam" (*BAI* 7 [1993], pp. 155–63) as well as in the tribute to Professor A. D. H. Bivar (*ibid.*, p. 3), I followed the view that a coin of Gondophares, the Sakā king of Seistan, introduces him as SĀM (Σᾶμ). This was used as a supplementary reasoning for the identification, originally proposed by J. Marquart, of Gondophares with the heroic figure of the Iranian national epic, Rustam. While still maintaining the correctness of the various arguments adhered to or advanced in that article, and of the general conclusions stated thereupon, I must give up the interpretation of the coin legend as SĀM. This is due to the evidence presented in a letter dated October 1, 1994, by the owner of the coin in question, Mr. R. C. Senior, a numismatist of high repute and gatherer of the largest collection of the Indo-Scythian coins. Relevant statements from his letter are quoted here.

The reading of the surname of Gondophares was based on a single specimen in the collection of Mr. Senior (see A. D. H. Bivar, "Gondophares and the Shāhnāma," *IA* 16 [1981], p. 145), who now possesses four of the same. The surname had been read by him "as SAH, the last letter being a form of long E." It was published as such by M. Mitchiner. Senior had also "found that

the inspiration for the legend was the drachm of Mithradates III, Sellwood type 41.17 (see also 41.1) of c. 57–54 B.C." The legends on the reverse of all four coins clearly show the long E in the king's name, ΥΝΔΟΦΕΡΡΕΣ, to be in the form of Ή, and this is exactly how the last letter of the surname appears on these coins. There remains no doubt that Senior is right, and the surname must be read as SAH/SAE. Senior then writes:

Whether SAH (SAE) refers to his Saka ancestry, is a title Shah or a simple surname I leave to you to consider. A further point that I have been making for some years is that we should abandon the dating of Gondophares reign as c. 19–46 A.D. This is also untenable and was only adhered to because most western scholars wanted to prove the truth in the Apocryphal Acts of St. Thomas, that the latter went to India. That he met a Gondophares is not a problem since in my collection (as yet unpublished but MANY times larger than all the published collections put together) I have coins of at least six different Gondophares, with different personal names. The word is a title, much as Augustus or Caesar became (rather than a dynastic name such as Arsakes). The first Gondophares came to power after the death of Phraates III in 57 B.C. (whose coins he imitates, both with and without tiara—on the latter he calls himself Autokrator and Victorious). The fact that he uses a legend following that of the patricide Mithradates III and countermarks the coins of his brother Orodes II indicates his early date.

A. Shapur Shahbazi